

Amendements to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-9 (canceled).

Claims 10-13 (withdrawn).

1 Claim ~~14~~ (new): A method for preparing an etchant comprising a solution of tetramethylammonium hydroxide in water, wherein

- A liquid source of silicate ions is mixed with said solution, and
- An oxidizer is added to said etchant at a time later than 10 minutes following immersion of a sample comprised of silicon in said etchant.

2 Claim ~~15~~ (new): The method of claim 14, wherein said oxidizer is ammonium peroxydisulfate.

3 Claim ~~16~~ (new): The method of claim 14, wherein said oxidizer is obtained from a liquid source of oxidizer.

4 Claim ~~17~~ (new). The method of claim 16, wherein said liquid source of oxidizer is a solution of ammonium peroxydisulfate in water.

5 Claim ~~18~~ (new). The method of claim 14, wherein a quantity of tetramethylammonium hydroxide is added to said etchant at a time later than ten minutes following immersion of said sample in said etchant.

6 Claim ~~19~~ (new). The method of claim 18, wherein said quantity of tetramethylammonium hydroxide is sufficient to maintain the pH of said etchant substantially above the threshold for silicate precipitation.

7 Claim ~~20~~ (new). The method of claim 14, wherein said liquid source of dissolved silicate ions is a colloidal suspension of silicon dioxide.